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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between an instructional supervisor's behavior and personality. A survey instrument was used to determine how frequently 56 supervisors preferred to perform and actually performed 10 major supervisory tasks. The Rokeach Dogmatism Scale was used to measure the individual's belief-disbelief system. The respondents were grouped into three categories according to the level of measured dogmatism, and the data were analyzed with the use of an analysis of variance procedure to determine if personality and behavior were related. Findings indicate that closed-minded supervisors preferred to perform public relations tasks and that open-minded supervisors performed two tasks more frequently: organizing for instruction and evaluating. The effects of personality, however, were not as powerful as expected. (Author/MLF)

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SUPERVISOR PERSONALITY AND TASK PREFERENCE

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to answer three basic questions:

1. Does the personality of instructional supervisors as reflected in the openness or closedness of their belief-disbelief system (degree of dogmatism) relate to how frequently they perform ten supervisory tasks?

Developing Curriculum

Organizing for Instruction

Staffing

Providing Facilities

Providing Materials

Arranging for Inservice Education

Orienting New Staff Members

Relating Special Services

Developing Public Relations

Evaluating

2. Does the personality of instructional supervisors relate to their choice of tasks which they prefer to perform?

3. Does the personality of instructional supervisors relate to the correspondence of ideal and actual performance of supervisory tasks?

Perspective

Educational supervision has generally been described by various adjectives since its humble beginnings in colonial America in the mid 1600's. A few of the terms used to describe this profession have included the adjectives emerging, reluctant, and evolutionary. Harold Spears (1953) has alluded to the various eras or concepts of supervision in America Education including:

1. Inspection for the sake of control rendered primarily by lay people from the colonial period through the Civil War.

2. Inspection for the sake of control by state, intermediate unit (county) and local superintendents during the 19th century.

3. Supervision for the improvement of instruction through direct classroom observation with attention directed to weaknesses of the teacher from about 1910 until about 1935.

4. Supervision focused upon cooperative study enterprises such as curriculum development; inservice education activities aimed at the improvement of instruction. This period was from approximately 1935 until about 1963.

5. A continuation of the cooperative (democratic) approach with the provision made for increased community participation at the local, state, and federal level. This latter stage was begun in 1964 and continues until the present time.

In the time interval since the early colonial attempts at educational supervision until the present time, a common problem has continued to plague this profession. The problem has been the absence of an acceptable theory of supervision which could be improved upon and transmitted from one generation of professional supervisors to another. Robert Goldhammer (1969) addressed this problem when he said:

"---------- supervision has neither a fundamental substantive content nor a consciously determined and universally recognized process -- both its staff and its method tend to be random, residual, frequently archaic, and eclectic in the worse sense."

A conceptual approach to supervision interns of specific behaviors on the part of the supervisor was offered by Ben Harris (1963). This approach

included the identification of specific tasks, processes, and skills involved in supervision. Utilizing the ten tasks of supervision identified by Harris and identified previously in this paper, Esposito (1974) and others have theorized that the role behavior of supervisors can be explained by the interaction of an ideographic and nomothetic dimension, in an adaptation of the Gatzels-Guba (1957) model. Esposito's early studies indicate that the personality of an individual within a social system has a significant effect upon his/her role performance and that the differences found between actual and ideal task ratings can be explained by a supervisor manifesting varying degrees of dogmatism. Hypotheses also predict that out of deference to authority closed-minded supervisors will perform those tasks prescribed for them by their supervisors regardless of personal priorities, and furthermore that closed-minded individuals will manifest a lower correspondence between actual and ideal task self-rankings than their open-minded colleagues.

This study, undertaken in summer of 1981 and continuing until fall of that same year, was designed along the same lines as the Esposito studies dealing with supervisory personalities and task performance. The current study was aimed at contributing to the body of knowledge relative to educational supervision by determining if the results of the Esposito studies would be replicated in another setting seven years after the original study.

Method

The Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Form E, was administered to each of the practicing instructional supervisors by graduate students enrolled in an advanced graduate course in educational administration, "Problems in Educational Supervision". This instrument yields a score intended to indicate the degree to which an individual is open to change on the basis of new

experience. Analysis of these scores allowed the subjects to be categorized into one of three personality categories; open, middle, or closed.

Each of the subjects was also asked to rank-order 10 major tasks of supervision in terms of the frequency in which they actually performed the task and would prefer to perform the task if given the opportunity. Mean scores for each of the 10 supervisory tasks, actual and ideal, were computed. Differences between actual and ideal rankings were also obtained by subtracting ideal from actual ranks.

To facilitate the interpretation and reporting of the data, all task ranks were inverted directionally so that a high score indicated the task was performed or ideally performed with a high preference. This was accomplished by subtracting each ranking from a constant (11). The resulting scale ranged from 1 to 10, a 1 indicated low preference or performance and a 10 indicated a high preference or performance.

Mean rankings for each of the tasks and differences were computed for each of the three dogmatic groups and the resulting data were analyzed with an analysis of variance technique to determine any significant differences among the groups. Contrasts were then performed between the open and closed dogmatic groups when applicable.

Data Source

Sixty seven instructional supervisors, elementary, secondary and general, from Eastern North Carolina, were invited to take part in this study. Of this total, 11 were discarded because of incompleteness.

Results and Conclusions

The results of the analysis of variance of mean rankings for the actual and preferred tasks yielded one significant difference at the .05 level.

Closed-minded supervisors preferred to perform the task of developing public relations more frequently than open-minded supervisors. A significant difference also occurred for two additional tasks at the .10 level. Open-minded supervisors reported that they performed two tasks more frequently than closed-minded supervisors; organizing for instruction and evaluating. No significant differences occurred when differences between actual and ideal rankings were computed and analyzed.

Implications

There are several implications for educational supervisors which can be drawn from this study including the following:

1. Given the constraints of the present economy, including the close scrutiny and demands for strict accountability, supervisors may be reluctant to permit personality preferences to unduly influence their selection of task preference.

2. School boards, administrators, and various community pressure groups wield considerable influence regarding the selection and accomplishment of supervisory tasks.

3. Greater uniformity, which may be caused by societal and institutional pressures, may be a determining factor in the selection of supervisory task priorities and may tend to restrict, at least to some degree, creative innovations in supervisory behavior.

4. To some degree, the quest for an effective theory of educational supervision will continue to be an elusive goal.

5. Additional research leading to a meaningful theory of educational supervision is justified and should be encouraged by those who are researchers and practioners in this field.

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TABLE 1 AN ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MEAN RANKINGS FOR DIFFERENTIATED PERSONALITY GROUPS CONCERNING TASKS ACTUALLY PERFORMED BY INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISORS

Task	Open N= 9	Middle N = 38	Closed N= 9	df 55	F Ratio
1	6.22	7.52	7.11		.96
2	8.67	7.63	6.44		2.39**
3	5.44	5.23	5.55		.05
4	3.66	3.63	4.00		.05
5	6.33	6.63	7.33		.54
6	4.55	6.28	4.00		3.74*
7	4.33	5.10	5.33		.64
8	5.00	4.60	5.44		.37
9	5.22	4.63	6.11		1.05
10	5.55	3.60	3.66		2.51**

* significant p .05
** significant p .10

TABLE 2 DERIVED T-VALUES COMPARING MEAN RANKINGS FOR OPEN AND CLOSED PERSONALITY GROUPS CONCERNING TASKS ACTUALLY PERFORMED BY INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISORS

Task	Open $\bar{X}$	Open SD	Closed $\bar{X}$	Closed SD	t
2	8.67	2.39	6.44	2.74	1.80 **p .08 two tail p .04 one tail
10	5.55	2.24	3.66	2.17	1.81 **p .08 two tail p .04 one tail

TABLE 3 AN ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF MEAN RANKINGS FOR DIFFERENTIATED PERSONALITY GROUPS CONCERNING TASKS IDEALLY PERFORMED BY INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISORS

Task	Open N= 9	Middle N = 38	Closed N= 9	df 55	F Ratio
1	8.55	9.05	7.66		1.79
2	8.00	7.86	7.22		.49
3	6.11	5.39	5.00		.33
4	2.88	3.77	3.55		.34
5	5.00	5.71	5.22		.47
6	6.00	5.94	5.00		.82
7	4.77	5.34	5.44		.28
8	4.33	4.21	5.22		.52
9	4.11	4.00	7.33		6.30*
10	5.22	3.73	3.33		1.35

* significant $p<.05$

TABLE 4 DERIVED T-VALUES COMPARING MEAN RANKINGS FOR OPEN AND CLOSED PERSONALITY GROUPS CONCERNING TASKS IDEALLY PERFORMED BY INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISORS

Task	Open $\bar{x}$	Open SD	Closed $\bar{x}$	Closed SD	t
9	4.11	2.80	7.33	2.64	2.50 *p .02

TABLE 5 A COMPARISON OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ACTUAL AND IDEAL RANKINGS OF SUPERVISORY TASKS BY OPEN AND CLOSED MINDED SUPERVISORS

Task	Open N= 9	Middle N = 38	Closed N= 9	df 55	F Ratio
1	2.33	1.55	0.55		.86
2	-.67	.23	.77		.91
3	.66	.15	-.55		.35
4	.15	1.55	1.43		.34
5	-1.33	-.92	-2.11		.89
6	1.45	-.34	1.00		2.62
7	-.44	.23	.11		.04
8	-.66	-.39	-.22		.08
9	-1.11	-.63	1.22		1.86
10	-.33	.13	-.33		.17